

Message Text

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NODIS

FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: REFLECTIONS ON PROPOSALS FOR TALKS

1. THE DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE SEEN JOHN GRAHAM AND MY JOINT REPORT SENT THROUGH BRITISH CHANNELS TO LONDON COVERING OUR INITIAL MEETINGS ON RETURN TO SALISBURY WITH JACK GAYLARD AND ELLIOT GABELLAH. BOTH OF THEM PROPOSED A RESTRICTED MEETING OF THE PRINCIPALS IN SECRECY SOMEWHERE IN BOTSWANA. WE BELIEVE THEY CAME TO THEIR PROPOSALS QUITE SEPARATELY.

2. THEIR PROPOSAL CONTRASTS WITH THAT MADE TO US BY DAVID SMITH IN THE MEETING OF THE DEPUTIES TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS ON JUNE 14. UNDER SMITH'S PROPOSAL WE WOULD START OFF WITH PRIVATE PREPARATORY MEETINGS AT THE WORKING LEVEL WHICH WOULD LEAD LATER TO A FULL SCALE CONFERENCE. THE NEW PROPOSAL IS THE OPPOSITE. IT WOULD HAVE US START OFF WITH A MEETING OF PRINCIPALS WHICH WOULD ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE MAJOR PROBLEMS AND THEN PRESUMABLY, IF SUCCESSFUL, DIRECT WORKING LEVEL TALKS TO AGREE ON DETAILS. GAYLARD SUGGESTS THAT THE UK AND US ALLOW THE SIX PRINCIPALS TO MEET AMONG THEMSELVES. GABELLAH WOULD INCLUDE US. GAYLARD BELIEVES THAT THE FIRST OF THESE PROPOSALS COULD NOT WORK. A BREAK-
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THROUGH, HE SAYS, WILL REQUIRE PARTICIPATION OF THE PRINCIPALS. FURTHERMORE HE BELIEVES IT MUST BE SMALL AND PRIVATE AND WILL NEED TWO DAYS OR MORE OF TALKS. HE BASES HIS VIEW ON THE SUCCESS OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WHICH HE SAID ONLY CAME ABOUT AFTER HOURS OF MEETINGS ALONE BETWEEN THE PRINCIPALS.

3. FROM OUR TALKS WITH THE ZAMBIANS AND JOSHUA NKOMO I BELIEVE THAT THE SECOND PROPOSAL IS PROBABLY CLOSER TO WHAT THEY HAVE IN MIND. BOTH NKOMO AND THE ZAMBIANS SEEM TO ENVISAGE A CONFERENCE WHICH STARTS OFF WITH PRINCIPALS WHO MANDATE COMMITTEE LEVEL WORK TO HAMMER OUT THE DETAILS. (THOUGH THE ZAMBIANS ALSO SUPPORT COMMITTEE WORK BEFORE A CONFERENCE). HOWEVER THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT NKOMO HAS IN MIND AND THE NEW SALISBURY SUGGESTION IS STILL QUITE CONSIDERABLE. NKOMO'S WOULD BE A PUBLIC CONFERENCE AND PROBABLY INVOLVE LARGE DELEGATIONS. GAYLARD BELIEVES THIS IS A RETURN TO GENEVA AND A RECIPE FOR FAILURE. IT WOULD BE HARD NOT TO AGREE WITH HIM UNLESS THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE PREPARATION DONE BEFORE HAND WHICH WOULD BRING US BACK TO THE FIRST ALTERNATIVE. NKOMO ALSO ENVISAGES A CONFERENCE BASED ON THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSAL IN WHICH THE UK AND US TAKE A PROMINENT PART AND OTHER OBSERVERS ARE INVOLVED. MUGABE PROBABLY FEELS EVEN MORE STRONGLY ON THESE SUBJECTS. WHILE NKOMO MAY BE INCLINED TO SEE SOME MERIT IN THE NEW SALISBURY PROPOSAL I BELIEVE HE WILL BE HARD TO CONVINCE AND MUGABE EVEN MORE SO. THEY WILL ASK THAT IF THEY ARE WILLING TO AGREE PUBLICLY TO ATTEND A MEETING WHICH IS ANNOUNCED AHEAD OF TIME WHY SHOULDN'T THE SALISBURY GROUP DO SO. AND THEY WILL INSIST ON THEIR FICTION THAT THE DISCUSSIONS MUST BE WITH THE BRITISH WHO INCLUDE SMITH AND THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS IN THEIR DELEGATION. ONLY IF NKOMO SEES
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AN ADVANTAGE TO THE MEETING AND IF WE ARE ABLE TO GET KAUNDA'S AND PARTICULARLY MACHEL'S HELP WOULD WE BE ABLE TO CONVINCE THEM TO ATTEND. NKOMO WOULD PROBABLY AGREE FIRST. WE WOULD HAVE TO USE HIM TO CONVINCE MUGABE.

4. AS TO THE CONFERENCE ITSELF, IT IS LIKELY THAT IF NKOMO AGREED TO SUCH A MEETING HE WOULD DO SO WITH THE IDEA IN MIND THAT HE COULD USE IT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASSERT HIS LEADERSHIP AND FORM SOME KIND OF A NATIONAL UNITY GROUP AMONG THE AFRICANS WITH HIMSELF AT THE HEAD, THEREBY POSTPONING ELECTIONS. WE ON THE OTHER HAND AND PROBABLY THE RHODESIANS WOULD APPROACH A CONFERENCE AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET AGREEMENT ON ELECTIONS WHICH WOULD CHOOSE A NEW GOVERNMENT. WHETHER THE BASIS WAS AGREEMENT ON A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY OR ON AN ELECTION PROCEDURE, NKOMO MIGHT JOIN PROVIDED THAT SMITH WAS WILLING TO MAKE IMPORTANT FURTHER CONCESSIONS SO THAT THE AGREEMENT WHICH CAME OUT OF THE CONFERENCE WAS A MARKED IMPROVEMENT OVER THE MARCH 3 SALISBURY INTERNAL ACCORD. WHETHER MUGABE WOULD BE WILLING TO GO ALONG OR NOT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY. IF THE RESULT WAS AN ELECTION PROCEDURE HIS PARTICIPATION MIGHT NOT BE SO IMPORTANT

BUT IF IT WAS A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY THERE WOULD
BE SOME WHO WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT THAT THE
PEOPLE OF RHODESIA HAD EXPRESSED THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE
SETTLEMENT.

5. WE WILL KNOW MORE AFTER SEEING SMITH THIS AFTERNOON-
FRIDAY, JUNE 23.
EDMONNDSON

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NNN

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